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ABSTRACT

The views of professional education concerning the appropriate bases for judging the effectiveness of teachers were studied through a parallel-perceptions inquiry with 264 public school teachers and administrators versus 58 Harcum Junior College teacher respondents. The 1970 study used a questionnaire consisting of 14 criteria of the effective teacher, which were drawn from a survey instrument developed by Jenkins and Banselle. Respondents anonymously ranked the criteria using a nine-point Likert-type scale. The public school teachers and administrators ranked highly student teacher interaction, and the top-ranked criterion for the Harcum faculty members was the willingness to be flexible, to be direct or indirect as the situation requires. The public school respondents considered what one does in the classroom to count at least as much as the effects or outcomes (i.e., student growth and classroom processes are more important criteria for teacher evaluation than are nonclassroom variables, such as years of experience and community participation). Although the criterion of how much students learn was not seen as particularly important in judging teacher effectiveness by the public school respondents (relative to the other criteria), it received the second highest rating by the Harcum sample. A significant finding was the variance among the responses of the two study groups. (SW)

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FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF "EFFECTIVE" TEACHERS
A parallel-perceptions inquiry

by

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Abstract:

What do professional educators believe are the appropriate bases for judging the effectiveness of teachers? Perhaps the most significant conclusion to be drawn from this parallel-perceptions inquiry is the substantial variance noted in the responses of the 264 public school teachers and administrators versus the Harcum Junior College teaching faculty respondents (N =58).

The differences are very clearly reflected in the numerical ratings assigned by these members of the same profession teaching at different 'graded' levels; i,e, secondary and collegiate. Quite clear is the fact that these two groups of teachers differ widely in their perceptions of what is important in determining teacher effectiveness. Why?

Possibly the next logical step to be taken is to carefully examine the assumptions which undergird their choices among these particular criterion elements.

Faculty Perceptions of "Effective" Teachers
(A parallel-perceptions inquiry)

What do professional educators believe are the appropriate bases for judging the effectiveness of teachers? To determine how Harcum Junior College faculty perceive an "effective" teacher, they were invited in the 1970s to respond anonymously to a questionnaire which consisted of 14 criterion elements relating to effective teaching. These were drawn from a survey instrument developed by Jenkins and Bansell. For each of the criterion elements they were asked to rate it on a scale ranging from 1 = Completely Unimportant up to 9 = Extremely Important. Some 58, or 76% responded, and their average ratings are summarized in Table 1, attached. Additionally, the views of some 264 public school teachers and administrators are reported in this parallel-perceptions inquiry.

In a prior study (Gurney) it was noted that although the human relations aspects of teaching and the ability of the teacher to improve them are difficult to measure, yet ...."they show up as important evaluation criteria of administrators and teachers." (p. 774) Gurney further notes that ...."dynamism and warmth appear to be important aspects of teaching, as reflected in the high ratings given by .... educators to criteria related to such humanistic aspects as teacher flexibility, personalization of teaching, good rapport, and sensitivity to the student point of view."

An earlier study (Jenkins and Bausell) reported findings in which "Process" criteria were judged as being more important than "Product" criteria. These quoted terms, "process" and "product" relate to the survey instrument developed by Jenkins and Bausell which was based on categories developed by Mitzel to identify three broad classifications of criteria used to study teaching effectiveness.

As Jenkins and Bausell point out, these three categories are:

Product Criteria:

When teachers are judged by their effectiveness in changing student behavior: (a measured change in 'product'). These relate to measures of growth in skills, knowledge of subject matter, and attitude.

Process Criteria:

When teacher evaluation is based upon classroom behavior, either ; either the teacher's behavior, his student's behavior, or the interplay of teacher/student behavior, the assessor is using process criteria, in Mitzel's scheme. These could include teacher verbal behavior, methods, and classroom control; and students might be rated for their verbal behavior and attentiveness.

Presage Criteria:

Teacher evaluation based upon personality or intellectual attributes such as industry, intelligence, and character; as wellas performance in training and achievement; i.e. success in student teaching and marks in educational courses.

As Jenkins and Bausell conclude; "These criteria are, at best, indirect measures of a teacher's effectiveness and are normally chosen because in someone's view they are related to, and therefore predict, either process or product criteria." (p. 572)

When the average ratings of the two groups noted in Table 1 are examined, it is noted:

1- the Delaware group, (i.e. the public school teachers and administrators), ranks highly the interaction of students and faculty. This criterion received the highest rating in the element "Relationship with class". For the Harcum respondents their average rating for this criterion was 7.50, or the 4th highest-ranked rating. For these Harcum faculty members, their top-ranked criterion was "Willingness to be flexible, to be direct or indirect as the

situation demands."

2- There is a far-greater clustering of ratings by the Harcum group of respondents than for the Delaware group. This is evidenced in the greater range of ratings offered by the Delawarians.

3- The "process" and "product" combined means for the Delaware group suggests that the Delawarians would, as Jenkins and Bausill note; .... "depend at least as much, if not more, on their classroom procedures and processes as they would on these products. Putting it another way, they consider that what one does in the classroom counts at least as much as the effects or outcomes of doing it.

"There is further substantial agreement that both student growth and classroom processes are more important criteria for teacher evaluation than are non-classroom variables such as years of experience and community participation."

The Harcum group "Process" and "Product" means, although the inverse of the Delaware group rankings, would also warrent the same general conclusions, as they are both slighly higher than the "Presage" mean.

4- Although the criterion "Amounts Students Learn" was not seen as particularly important in judging teacher effectiveness by the Delaware group, at least relative to the other criteria rated, it received the second highest rating by the Harcum sample.

5- Both groups bottom-rated the 13th and 14th "Presage" criteria, and also 3rd-rated criterion # 3. In all of the remaining ratings they are divergent in their order of rankings among these 14 criterion elements.

Perhaps the most significant conclusion to be drawn from this parallel-perceptions inquiry is the variance noted among the responses of the Delaware and Harcum groups. These are very clearly reflected in the numerical ratings assigned to these 14 criterion elements by individuals in the same profession

located at different levels of educational institutions; i.e. secondary and collegiate. Quite clear is the fact that these two groups differ widely in their perceptions of what is important in determining teacher effectiveness - why? Possibly the next logical step to be explored are the assumptions which underlie the choice of these particular criterion elements.

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Table 1. - Mean Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness Criteria: Rank-ordered for "Delaware" Group

Criteria	Type (Mitzel Scheme)	Delaware (N = 234)	Harcum (N = 58)
1. Relationship with class (good rapport)	Process	8.31	7.50
2. Willingness to be flexible, to be direct of indirect as situation demands	Presage	8.17	7.75
3. Effectiveness in controlling his class	Process	7.88	7.55
4. Capacity to perceive the world from the student's point of view	Process	7.79	6.40
5. Personal adjustment and character	Presage	7.71	7.05
6. Influence on student's behavior	Product	7.65	6.30
7. Knowledge of subject matter and related areas	Presage	7.64	6.45
8. Ability to personalize his teaching	Process	7.63	6.50
9. Extent to which his verbal behavior in classroom is student - centered	Process	7.27	7.35
10. Extent to which he uses inductive (discovery) methods	Process	6.95	5.90
11. Amount his students learn	Product	6.86	7.60
12. General knowledge and understanding of educational facts	Presage	6.43	7.30
13. Participation in community and professional activities	Presage	4.88	5.00
14. Years of teaching experience	Presage	3.89	4.80
Range =		3.89 - 8.31 or 4.42	4.80 - 7.75 or 2.95
14 Combined criteria mean =		7.07	6.67
Mitzel scheme Combined means:			
	Process =	7.64	6.87
	Product =	7.26	6.95
	Presage =	6.43	6.39